

IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1. (Previously Presented) An information providing method of providing information to a user, said method comprising:

an extraction step of searching a first database for a first information corresponding to an inputted code and extracting the first information;

a first information layout determination step of determining a layout for printing the first information on a paper sheet in accordance with the first information extracted in said extraction step;

an attachment step of attaching a second information that is extracted from a second database and is printed in a margin on the paper sheet to the first information when the user elects to attach the second information to the first information; and

an output step of outputting the first information with the second information attached thereto in said attached step in accordance with the layout, wherein:

an insertion condition for attaching the second information is set in the first information by an information provider, and

said attachment step attaches the second information to the first information in accordance with the insertion condition.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the code is inputted by a terminal apparatus connected to a network.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a printing step of printing the outputted information.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the first information includes information expected by the user.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that the second information includes arbitrary advertisement information.

6.-8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that

the first database stores a plurality of information extractable as the first information, each of the plurality of information being associated with a code, and

the second database stores a plurality of advertisement information extractable as the second information, each of the plurality of advertisement information being associated with a code.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that

said method is used by a plurality of information provider servers each including a first database and a second database,
a management server systematically controls the plurality of information provider servers, and
the plurality of information provider servers and the management server are connected through a network.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, characterized in that an information provider server is included in the management server.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, characterized in that

the management server includes a first table which stores a relationship between a respective code of each of a plurality of first information and a respective information provider server storing the first information, and

said extraction step specifies an information provider server storing the first information by looking up the first table, searches the first database of the information provider server for the first information corresponding to the inputted code, and extracts the first information.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, characterized in that

the management server includes a second table which stores a relationship between a respective code of each of a plurality of second information and a respective information provider server storing the second information, and

said attachment step specifies an information provider server storing the second information by looking up the second table, searches the second database of the information provider server for the second information, extracts the second information, and attaches the extracted second information to the first information.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, further comprising a first registration step of registering the first information in which the insertion condition is set in the first database.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, characterized in that said first registration step stores the registered first information together with a code for identifying the registered first information.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, further comprising a first registration step of registering the first information together with a code for identifying the registered first information in the first database, wherein

a server identifier for discriminating an information provider server from remaining ones of the plurality of information provider servers is assigned in advance to each of the plurality of information provider servers, and

the code for identifying the first information registered in said first registration step includes the server identifier of the information provider server and an information identifier for discriminating the registered first information from other information in the information provider server.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, characterized in that said first registration step comprises

an image input step of inputting an original image,
a transmission step of sending the inputted original image to the first database, and
a code giving step of giving a code to be attached to the original image.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, characterized in that said first registration step comprises

a character information input step of inputting character information,
a transmission step of sending the inputted character information to the first database, and
a code giving step of giving a code to be attached to the character information.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, further comprising a first change step of changing the first information registered in the first database.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, further comprising a deletion step of deleting the first information registered in the first database.

21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a second registration step of registering the second information in the second database.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, characterized in that said second registration step stores the registered second information together with a code for identifying the registered second information.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, characterized in that

the terminal apparatus stores terminal specification information associated with specifications of the terminal apparatus in advance,

the code is inputted together with the terminal specification information,
and

said attachment step extracts, using the terminal specification information, the second information from the second database.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a third registration step of registering in advance, in units of users, user profile information used to determine the second information extracted from the second database.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, characterized in that

the inputted code includes a user identifier for identifying the user, and said attachment step specifies a corresponding user profile based on the user identifier of the inputted code, searches for the second information corresponding to the user profile, extracts the second information, and attaches the extracted second information to the first information.

26.-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) An information providing system for providing information to a user, said system comprising:

an extraction circuit for searching a first database for a first information corresponding to an inputted code and extracting the first information;

a first information layout determination circuit for determining a layout for printing the first information on a paper sheet in accordance with the first information extracted by said extraction circuit,

an attachment circuit for attaching a second information that is extracted from a second database and is printed in a margin on the paper sheet to the first information when the user elects to attach the second information to the first information; and

an output unit for outputting the first information with the second information attached thereto by said attachment circuit in accordance with the layout, wherein:

an insertion condition for attaching the second information is set in the first information by an information provider, and

said attachment circuit attaches the second information to the first information in accordance with the insertion condition.

30. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising a terminal apparatus connected to a network, wherein the code is inputted by the terminal apparatus through the network.

31. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising a terminal apparatus connected to a network, wherein said terminal apparatus includes a printer for printing the outputted information.

32. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, characterized in that the first information includes information expected by the user.

33. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, characterized in that the second information includes arbitrary advertisement information.

34.-36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, characterized in that

the first database stores a plurality of information extractable as the first information, each of the plurality of information being associated with a code, and

the second database stores a plurality of advertisement information extractable as the second information, each of the plurality of advertisement information being associated with a code.

38. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, characterized in that

said system is used in a plurality of information provider servers each including a first database and a second database,

a management server systematically controls the plurality of information provider servers, and

the plurality of information provider servers and the management server are connected through a network.

39. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 38, characterized in that an information provider server is included in the management server.

40. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 38, characterized in that

the management server includes a first table which stores a relationship between a respective code of each of a plurality of first information and an information provider server storing the first information, and

said extraction circuit specifies an information provider server storing the first information by looking up the first table, searches the first database of the information provider server for the first information corresponding to the inputted code, and extracts the first information.

41. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 38, characterized in that

the management server includes a second table which stores a relationship between a respective code of each of a plurality of second information and an information provider server storing the second information, and

said attachment circuit specifies an information provider server storing the second information by looking up the second table, searches the second database of the information provider server for the second information, extracts the second information, and attaches the extracted second information to the first information.

42. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising a first registration circuit for registering the first information in which the insertion condition is set in the first database.

43. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 42, characterized in that said first registration circuit includes a memory for storing the registered first information together with a code for identifying the registered first information.

44. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 38, further comprising a first registration circuit for registering the first information together with a code for identifying the registered first information in the first database, wherein

a server identifier for discriminating an information provider server from remaining ones of the plurality of information provider servers is assigned in advance to each of the plurality of information provider servers, and

the code for identifying the first information registered by said first registration circuit includes the server identifier of the information provider server and an

information identifier for discriminating the registered first information from other information in the information provider server.

45. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 42, characterized in that said first registration circuit comprises

an image input unit for inputting an original image,

a transmission circuit for sending the inputted original image to the first database, and

a code giving circuit for giving a code to be attached to the original image.

46. (Canceled)

47. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 42, characterized in that said first registration circuit comprises

a character information input unit for inputting character information,

a transmission circuit for sending the inputted character information to the first database, and

a code giving circuit for giving a code to be attached to the character information.

48. (Canceled)

49. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 42, further comprising a first change circuit for changing the first information registered in the first database.

50. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 42, further comprising a deletion circuit for deleting the first information registered in the first database.

51. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising a second registration circuit for registering the second information in the second database.

52. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 51, characterized in that said second registration circuit comprises a memory for storing the registered second information together with a code for identifying the registered second information.

53. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 30, characterized in that

said terminal apparatus stores terminal specification information associated with specifications of the terminal apparatus in advance,

the code is inputted together with the terminal specification information,
and

said attachment circuit extracts, using the terminal specification information, the second information from the second database.

54. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, further comprising a third registration circuit for registering in advance, in units of users, user profile information used to determine the second information extracted from the second database.

55. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 54, characterized in that

the inputted code includes a user identifier for identifying the user, and

said attachment circuit specifies a corresponding user profile based on the user identifier of the inputted code, searches for the second information corresponding to the user profile, extracts the second information, and attaches the extracted second information to the first information.

56.-59. (Canceled)

60. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium storing a program for implementing an information providing method for providing information to a user, the program comprising:

program code for an extraction step of searching a first database for a first information corresponding to an inputted code and extracting the first information;

program code for a first information layout determination step of determining a layout for printing the first information on a paper sheet in accordance with the first information extracted in the extraction step;

program code for an attachment step of attaching a second information that is extracted from a second database and is printed in a margin on the paper sheet to the first information when the user elects to attach the second information to the first information; and

program code for an output step of outputting the first information with the second information attached thereto in the attachment step in accordance with the layout, wherein:

an insertion condition for attaching the second information is set in the first information by an information provider, and

the attachment step attaches the second information to the first information in accordance with the insertion condition.

61.-87. (Canceled)

88. (Previously Presented) A terminal apparatus connected to a server via a network,

said server comprising:

an extraction circuit for searching a first database for a first information corresponding to an inputted code and extracting the first information;

a first information layout determination circuit for determining a layout for printing the first information on a paper sheet in accordance with the first information extracted by said extraction circuit;

an attachment circuit for attaching a second information that is extracted from a second database and is printed in a margin on the paper sheet to the first information when a user elects to attach the second information to the first information; and

an output unit for outputting the first information with the second information attached thereto by said attachment circuit in accordance with the layout,

wherein an insertion condition for attaching the second information is set in the first information by an information provider, and

wherein said attachment circuit attaches the second information to the first information in accordance with the insertion condition, and

said terminal apparatus comprising:

an image input unit for inputting an original image;

a transmission circuit for sending the inputted original image to the server for registering the inputted original image as the first information in the first database;

an input unit for inputting the code via the network; and

a printer for receiving the information outputted by said output unit via the network, and printing the received information.

89. and 90. (Canceled)

91. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said attachment step extracts a type of information registered by the user in advance and attaches the type of information as the second information to the first information.

92.-94. (Canceled)

95. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein said attachment circuit extracts a type of information registered by the user in advance and attaches the type of information as the second information to the first information.

96.-103. (Canceled)

104. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein, when the user sets an insertion area for attaching the second information to the first information, said attachment step attaches the second information to the first information in accordance with the insertion condition and the insertion area.

105. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the insertion condition is set either to permit insertion of the second information, to permit insertion of the second information in a lower level, or not to permit insertion of the second information.

106. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein, when the user sets an insertion area for attaching the second information to the first information, said attachment circuit attaches the second information to the first information in accordance with the insertion condition and the insertion area.

107. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 29, wherein the insertion condition is set either to permit insertion of the second information, to permit insertion of the second information in a lower level, or not to permit insertion of the second information.

108. (Previously Presented) The medium according to claim 60, wherein, when the user sets an insertion area for attaching the second information to the first information, the attachment step attaches the second information to the first information in accordance with the insertion condition and the insertion area.